



What The Fuck ?

Oh my fucking god, what the hell has the world come to?

WHASSUP !!!!! ...more



Digital TV: choice or cobblers?



Tribe's pick of the box.



Roswell High



Angel



Charmed



Young Americans



The West Wing



Dawson's Creek



Buffy the Vampire Slayer



Sex in the City - Sarah Jessica Parker Uncovered



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Picture the scene: it's Friday night. You're at home, watching TV. There's nothing on. All too believable, isn't it? Cos, let's face it, TV these days is rubbish. The average drama is written by people who would fail the McDonald's employees' written exam. Most are about doctors, vets and soldiers or are based on books no-one can be bothered to read so sad, fat Americans in the Midwest can watch tales from jolly old England (the place filled with people so nice they named their country after the language Americans speak). Alas, their TV is even stupider than ours.

It used to be good, but nowadays, blowing your nose is more entertaining (and what's more, the gossip mags aren't full of interviews with C-list, talentless celebrity nose-blowers and their unattractive, vacuous partners).

Wouldn't it be good if there were some other channels, filled with better programmes? Or even with some of the good programmes that used to be on TV, before TV production became populated with desperate-to-be-trendy, ex-public school, haven't-got-a-clue media graduates who think that riding scooters on pavements, wearing ironic T-shirts and talking like Jamie Oliver will mean even their biggest ideas won't be so laughable that anyone with any taste and decency who met them and discovered they were responsible for the abortions starring Robson Green that populate our screen under the title of "popular drama" would be instantly mandated under Geneva Convention to punch them senseless until their smug, toffee-nosed, talentless faces are unrecognisable? Well there is. Almost. It's called digital television.

But isn't television digital already?

No, in fact, the difference between normal "analogue" TV and digital TV is like the



difference between LPs and CDs. Except with pictures as well. Those pictures are getting on for the same quality as DVD pictures because they're made in the exactly the same way. So they're a lot clearer than standard pictures. Except when the wind blows your satellite dish. Or a train goes past. Or an ant hiccups in a field two miles from your house. So other than in those circumstances, you should be expecting a blinding picture.

Basically, digital TV gives you better sound and pictures (most of the time) for about £10 a month M(yes, you have to pay).

Bargain, huh?

But the fun doesn't start there. Oh no.

You get extra channels, filled with high-quality programming like ***PokŽmon*** (a cartoon series that teaches small impressionable children to catch wild animals and train them to fight one another), ***Temptation Island*** (in which moronic American couples are dumped on an island and separated, so equally stupid, greedy, genetically-under-equipped singles can attempt to seduce them in the privacy only national TV can offer) and even ***Global Prickly Heat***, international Ibiza beach games for those who find ***Big Break*** too intellectually stimulating and one of the few programmes in living memory in which **Julian Clary** is the well-behaved member of the line-up.

And all that's just on Sky One.

Because whatever your predilections, there's bound to be a channel that suits you. Interested in documentaries but just can't be bothered with all those history ones? How about ***Discovery Wings***, dedicated to documentaries about aircraft? Or perhaps you just can't get enough of the 17,000 programmes dedicated to renovating your house, flat, cat litter tray...and need to have access to another channel which will fill in the 30-second gaps between those programmes with yet more of the same. In which case **UK Style** is the channel for you.

Or maybe a doctor officially pronounced you brain-stem dead a couple of months ago and your festering corpse has decayed away, leaving just a foul-smelling putrescence that repulses all that is good and beautiful in the world. You should probably start subscribing to **Granada Men and Motors** right now.

On the other hand, there are the delights of **UK Drama, UK Gold, Play UK, Paramount Comedy** and **Granada Plus**, channels that have realised that showing repeats of the best stuff from British and American television from the last few decades is not only the best way to show things people might want to watch, but it's also dead cheap.

If you've actually stopped watching TV these days, because you've found you can't live with the nausea any more, you could just find the whole experience bearable again by subscribing to those channels. And **Sky One, E4** and Paramount's other great selling point is they have the rights to show the five or six good programmes currently being made before anyone can see them on analogue television, if at all. These programmes are like gold dust: treasure them for we know not how much longer they will go on for.

So how do you get digital television?

There are three ways.

1) Get Sky Digital

If the thought of sticking a two-foot diameter circle to the side of your house/flat/studio doesn't bother you (and history has shown us it probably won't), **Sky Digital** is the way to go. With approximately as many channels as there are **Jeffrey Archer** lies, Sky has something for every couch potato. And as long as there's no bad weather, a good picture is virtually guaranteed. It also has an online shopping system, so you can buy overpriced tatt using your remote control, thus bypassing even the minimal effort needed to order over the phone using a catalogue. Sign up down your local TV shop and in time, you'll find yourself owning more high-quality items of "Cubic Zirconium" jewellery than you ever thought possible.

2) OnDigital

OnDigital's main selling point is that you can use your current TV antenna for its service and don't need a satellite dish. You can also buy it from supermarkets. Its one drawback is that if you misalign your antenna by so much as a millimetre, your picture will be reduced to a single, flashing red dot. Which is pants. You also don't get as many channels as with Sky Digital and Sky One has slightly different programmes (bad luck all you **Xena: Warrior Princess** fans with OnDigital: you'll just have to sign up for the Playboy channel

instead).

3) Cable

Brilliant picture quality. High-speed internet access through your television set. What more could you ask for? Well how about customer service, not destroying the entire street or your house to come and lay the cable and the ability to get it in areas of London other than Kensington and Chelsea?

If all these extras channels weren't enough for you, you can also get some stupidly easy games through your TV set as well as slightly wider picture, if you buy a digital box.

Oh that's right. Didn't I mention that? If your TV isn't already somewhere near the ceiling, now you've had to fit your video, DVD player, PlayStation, etc underneath it, you'll also need to find space for another box for decoding all those digital signals. And then you'll have to wire it all up without electrocuting yourself or driving yourself insane as you try to work out whether SCART lead 1 is from the digital box and if you've connected it right so the video will be able to record off it or whether it's from the DVD and you'll end up recording a still frame from *The Sixth Sense* instead of repeats of *Starsky and Hutch* off Granada Plus.

In five years time, normal television is going to be turned off and it'll be digital or nothing. By which point, the number of channels will have grown exponentially so you'll be able to watch inter-den cub scout football 24-hours a day if you want. Looking forward to it yet?